

# Austin American Statesman

## Longtime legislator pushed for bilingual education

*Carlos Truan, 1935-2012*

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Carlos Truan, a South Texas businessman who spent more than 30 years as a state legislator, has died.

Truan, 76, who had a history of heart disease, died Tuesday night while working at his insurance office, according to his son, Rene Truan.

Truan was elected to the Texas House in 1968. He was elected to the state Senate in 1977.

Truan pushed for bilingual education in public schools and was known for pursuing strict ethics reforms. He retired from the Legislature in 2002.

Rene Truan, who spoke on behalf of the family, told the Corpus Christi Caller-Times that his father's health had been declining in the past few months.

"He was always a fighter," he said. "He was right up until the time of his death; wanting to help others in the community."

Lawmakers interviewed by the Caller-Times remembered Truan as a legendary debater whose marathon filibusters struck fear in the hearts of fellow lawmakers.

Rep. Todd Hunter, R-Corpus Christi, served with Truan in the Legislature from 1989 until 1997.

"This is a tremendous loss to the state of Texas," Hunter told the newspaper. "The time I served with him, he was always a strong voice for South Texas; in particular, he fought for border initiatives and appropriations."

State Sen. Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa, D-McAllen, served with Truan in the late 1980s and '90s. He remembered Truan's dedication to public service after he retired from the Legislature.

"Carlos Truan worked hard for working folks," Hinojosa told the newspaper. "He was an advocate and fearless leader and fighter for the rights of working families."

Corpus Christi leaders remembered him as an influential senator who pushed for more higher education opportunities in South Texas, including Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi's expansion in 1994 to allow freshman and sophomore enrollees.

"He was there for some very critical times for the university," University President Flavius Killebrew told the Caller-Times.

Truan's longtime assistant Belia Reynaga remembered working beside him around the clock to pursue public policy changes.

"He was always concerned about whether something was good for the people," she told the newspaper. "He would say, 'If it's not good for the people, it's not good for Texas.'"

Truan was born in Kingsville and received his business administration degree from Texas A&I University, now Texas A&M University-Kingsville, in 1959. He worked for decades as an insurance salesman.

Truan is survived by his wife, Elvira, and four children.

Rene Truan said there are plans to bury his father at the Texas State Cemetery in Austin.